DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 211 310 EC 013 119

AUTHOR Underwood, Shirley C.
TITLE Appalachian Folktales: A Unit of Study.
INSTITUTION Berea Coll., Ky.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 24p.; Prepared through the Appalachian Center.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Awareness; Cultural Education; Curriculum Development; *English Curriculum; *Folk Culture; Grade 10; Information Sources; Instructional Materials; Learning Activities; Literary Genres; *Oral Interpretation; Reading Skills; Secondary Education; Speech Skills; *Story Telling; Student Evaluation; Teaching Methods; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Appalachia; *Folktales; Oral Tradition; Tennessee

ABSTRACT

Designed to develop an appreciation of folktales as a literary type and a love for the oral tradition, this unit on the telling of folktales from the oral tradition, with an emphasis on Appalachian tales, can be adapted for use as an introduction to the study of the short story; to begin a study of regional writers or regional literature; to de-formalize public speaking units or classes; or as the motivational tool to encourage students to explore their own culture. Intended for use by the classroom teacher, this guide lists the objectives of the unit and the language arts skills to be acquired through its use. There is a list of preparations the teacher should make before beginning the unit. Following a brief discussion of literary, popular, and oral traditions is a list of collections of American and Appalachian folk tales to be used by both teachers and students throughout the unit. The unit also includes profiles of regional folktale collectors in Knox County, Tennessee; films and records to be used; names of resource persons; student activities; and two sample assignments. The unit concludes with suggested methods of student evaluation. (CM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED211310

APPALACHIAN FOLKTALES: A UNIT OF STUDY

by

Shirley C. Underwood

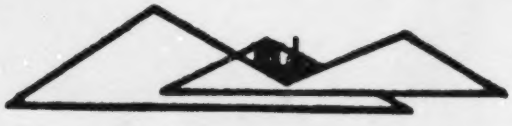
JAN 1982
ERIC/CRESS
RECEIVED

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.



BEREA COLLEGE APPALACHIAN CENTER
College Box 2336
Berea, Ky. 40403

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

shirley C. Underwood

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RC 013119

Appalachian Folktales:
A Unit of Study

Appalachian Workshop 1976
Berea College

Shirley C. Underwood

PROJECT AND PURPOSE

I have chosen to do a short unit of study on the telling of folktales from the oral tradition. I plan to use it as a part of English 10 at Carter High School in Knox County, Tennessee, but I have suggested other units and other classes where such a unit could be used. Our school already has a folklore class (largely regional literature), but storytelling has not been utilized to any great degree thus far in that class. As a teacher and as English Department chair-person, I hope the unit will be adopted (and adapted) for use in the folklore class.

LIMITATIONS OF PROJECT

1. Distance: Material on Tennessee tales and Knoxville-based story collectors was generally inaccessible. A visit to my hometown and school library would have been profitable.

2. Time: In addition to the obvious restriction imposed by the length of the workshop, the restriction of time a teacher is willing to devote to an experimental unit of study is a definite limitation. It is hoped the unit can be completed in no more than ten class periods.

3. Money: Much of this unit is based on material presently available in my school. Our budget is limited, and purchases for this school year have already been made. If capital outlay is very great, the initiation of the unit would have to be postponed a year.

4. Personality: The conflict of writing the unit specifically for my own teaching and at the same time keeping it general enough for teachers in other regions was difficult (perhaps impossible). Adaptation of any and all material is encouraged.

OVERVIEW OF UNIT

This unit of study is intended for use by the classroom teacher. Any or all of its parts may be adapted to fit the individual needs. Created for a tenth-grade English class of about thirty students representing a wide range of ability, it could effectively be used in many situations: as an introduction to a study of the short story; to begin a study of regional writers or regional literature; to deformalize public speaking units (or classes); or as the motivational tool to encourage students to explore their own culture. Although the unit will cover only a short period of time, approximately ten class days, it is hoped that its results will be compounded as time passes. Through the telling of tales, perhaps students can develop pride in

themselves and in their Appalachian ties. It is also hoped that students may re-discover the joys of telling and listening to the tales of our region and that the art of storytelling will be increased and perpetuated.

OBJECTIVES OF UNIT

By the end of the unit, it is hoped that each student will:

1. understand the significance of the oral tradition as a part of literature.
2. read a variety of folktales and learn to recognize the themes, symbols, and archtypes which are common among the tales.
3. explore sources (parents, grandparents, neighbors, etc.) for "original" tales.
4. develop some idea of the wealth of knowledge held by the people with whom he or she associates.
5. become personally involved in telling folktales to others.
6. become acquainted with some folktale collections.
7. familiarize herself with the literary devices, the skillful use of language and the humor of folktales.

LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS

While working with the unit, the student will be developing skills in:

1. Reading
   a. Reading for information
   b. Skimming for main idea and plot
   c. Extending vocabulary

2. Writing
   a. Organizing and preparing reports and in writing tales
   b. Sentence structure and grammar
   c. Punctuation - especially of dialogue
   d. Writing script for drama

3. Speaking
   a. Presenting tale to group
   b. Interviewing primary sources looking for tales
   c. Informal discussion and small-group techniques

A primary aim of this unit is to develop an appreciation of folktales as a literary type and a love for the oral tradition. Realizing that "appreciation" cannot be defined behaviorally, it is, nonetheless, a major aim of this unit.

TEACHER PREPARATION

To be completed before beginning unit:

1. Collect as many copies of tales as possible so students will have a variety of printed materials. Many tales are short and can easily be dittoed.

2. Acquaint yourself with the types of tales: Jack tales, animal tales, giant tales, and perhaps some local myths and legends.

3. Prepare to tell at least two (hopefully more) tales to the class.

4. If possible, have some recorded tales to share with students.

5. Try to locate any resource people in your community. (Don't overlook possible story retainers and tale tellers on your faculty).

6. Review material (brief outline and list of possible resources follow) for a lecture and/or class discussion on the folktale and the oral tradition.

BRIEF OUTLINE AND GENERAL RESOURCES

I. Three traditions of literature in our culture

A. Literary tradition: material written and read by persons of some education. Samples include books like Moby Dick, The Scarlet Letter, and The Dollmaker; stories like Twain's "Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County", Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," and Still's "Snail Pie"; and poems like Longfellow's "The Courtship of Miles Standish", Stuart's "These Hills I love", and Miller's "The Bee Woman."

B. Popular tradition: Material includes many versions of various aspects of our heritage as transmitted through the mass media. It often overlaps and merges with the other traditions in our literature. Samples include songs of Stephen Foster, movie and television script versions of Davy Crockett, "Bicentennial Minutes", etc.

C. Oral tradition: Material from those who can't, don't or won't write but who pass material from generation to generation by word of mouth. The material is continually changing, varying and developing because it is shaped by memories, creative talents, and the immediate needs of people in particular situations. Folktales are a part of this tradition.

*Division I of outline is adapted from text of Tristram P. Coffin and Hennig Cohen, editors, Folklore in America. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966. pp.xiii-xxiii.

II. The folktale as a literary form

A. Definition: Folktale is a general term referring to various types of traditional narratives known by the folk and passed from one generation (or from one individual to another) by word of mouth employing the everyday language of the people.

B. Types of tales (Examples rather than definitions should be used to clarify types.)

1. Legends
2. Fairy tales
3. Animal tales
4. Jack tales
5. Ghost
6. Grandfather
7. Tall tales

III. Collections of folk tales: This material is to be used by both teachers and students throughout the unit.

Botkin, Ben A. (ed.) Pocket Treasury of American Folklore. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1950.

Contains a variety of folk material including numerous types of tales and one Jack tale.

Chase, Richard. American Folk Tales and Songs. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971.

Contains tales of various types as well as ballads, jokes, riddles and songs; provides a good overview for the student with no background in the oral tradition. The "Amateur Collector's Guide" with its listing of typical titles and first lines is an excellent resource for the beginning collector.

Chase, Richard. Grandfather Tales. Houghton-Mifflin, 1948.

Contains twenty-four American-English folk tales which have been handed down for generations in the mountains of Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina.

Chase, Richard. The Jack Tales. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1943.

Contains eighteen Anglo-American tales collected from North Carolina and Virginia.

Davis, Hubert T. Hit's the Truth. Murfreesboro, N.C.: Johnson Publishing Co., 1973.

Contains thirty-three tall stories adapted from legends, myths and tales of the pioneers of Southwest Virginia and a glossary of terms and expressions frequently used in the tales.

Emrich, Duncan. Folklore on the American Land. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972.

Intended as an introduction to American folklore, this book contains a wide range and numerous examples of many kinds of folklore. Useful as a resource for both students and teachers.

Mountain Life and Work. Berea, Kentucky: Council of Southern Mountains.

Each early issue contains "folk tales for telling" as well as "folk songs for singing". (Series is no longer a featured part of publication).

Roberts, Leonard. Sang Branch Settlers. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1974.

Contains both folktales and folksongs collected from a single Kentucky family.

Roberts, Leonard. South from Hell-fer-Sartin. Berea, Ky.: Council of Southern Mountains, 1964.

Kentucky mountain folktales with notes concerning the source and type of tale and the motifs common to the tale.

Walker, Hugh. Tennessee Tales. Nashville, Tennessee: Aurora Publishers, 1970.

Not in the same vein as other folktale collections, this volume contains legends, stories, and historical accounts designed to make historical and geographic landmarks of Tennessee come alive - of special interest to the student who wants facts along with the fanciful.

IV. Regional folktale collectors: Knox County, Tennessee. It is important for the teacher to locate tale collectors in the local region. In many areas, collections of local tales have been published and are available through the public library system.

1. Bert Vincent - a long-time resident of East Tennessee who for many years collected tales and lore of the region, Mr. Vincent has published two collections of his materials. Although not currently in print, both books are readily available through local libraries in the Knoxville area."

2. Carson Brewer - a folklorist with a great interest in the flora and fauna of the Great Smoky Mountains, Mr. Brewer writes of the region in a regular feature in the Knoxville News-Sentinel. He frequently publishes the old tales as he hears them from the natives. His wide range of correspondents and personal contacts make his column a gold-mine for the reader interested in folk tales.

3. Don Whitehead - a journalist during World War II and two times a Pulitzer Prize winner for his correspondence: in 1950 for distinguished correspondence in the Korean War, and in 1951 for his domestic reporting. Mr. Whitehead is a native of Kentucky who now resides in Concord, Tennessee. His articles in the Knoxville News-Sentinel cover a wide range of topics, but frequently he writes stories, myths, and legends of the Appalachian Mountains.

V. Other resources

A. Film: "Fixin' to Tell About Jack". (color, 25 minutes. $300 sale; $30 rental for one day showing). Appalshop Inc., P.O. Box 743, Whitesburg, Kentucky 41858 (phone: 606-633-5708)

The 1974 release features Ray Hicks, a farmer-storyteller from Avery County, North Carolina, telling Jack tales to a group of children in the traditional style.

B. Records:

"Richard Chase, Jack Tales". (No. FTA-6) Folk-Legacy Records, Inc., Sharon, Connecticut 06069.

Three Jack tales recorded "live" before an audience of mountain children.

"Ray Hicks, Jack Tales". (No. FTA-14) Folk-Legacy Records, Inc., Sharon, Connecticut 06069.

Four "Jack Tales" told in authentic Black

Mountain, North Carolina dialect.

Records may be purchased from Folk-Legacy or the Council of Southern Mountains Bookstore, CPO 2307, Berea, Kentucky 40404 (phone: 606-986-3187) at $5.98 each.

C. Resource persons:

Barbara Freeman and Connie Regan, formerly with the Chattanooga, Tenn. library system, will now give instruction to teachers on the art of traditional storytelling in one-day workshops. They may be contacted c/o Bonnie Regan, 430 Lindbergh Drive NE, Apr. C3, Atlanta, Ga. 30305.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

It is suggested that those activities marked * be required of all students. The teacher may assign any or all of the remaining activities depending on the makeup of the class and personal inclination.

* 1. At the end of the unit, each student will tell one traditional tale before the class.

* 2. The teacher will tell a folktale to the class. Students will recreate it in their own language either orally or in writing. (Assignment suggestion from class lecture by Leonard Roberts, June 29, 1976.)

3. Record tales, either on tape or in writing, from original sources to share with the class. If enough interest is shown, prepare a class anthology of collected tales.

* 4. Read a variety of tales to become acquainted with the wide range of subject matter and recurring elements in the tale. (The teacher may choose to assign specific tales.)

5. Find a young audience outside school (younger brothers and sisters, the neighbors' children, or almost anybody available) and tell them a folktale. Write an account (personal-journal style) in which you discuss the experience and the reaction of the audience. This is good practice for Activity #1.

6. Story-telling hour: In small groups students will share tales in informal situation.

7. Tape an interview with an adult from the community about tale tellings and tale tellers in an earlier time and share the recording with classmates. If at all possible, record an adult telling a tale he has learned through the oral tradition.

8. If ample resources are available, a student might read and compare several variants of the same tale.

9. Prepare a list of expressions used in the tales which are peculiar to the dialect of the story and define each - as nearly as possible - in standard English. (See example on p. 13.)

* 10. The student will be able to define, explain, and use these terms:

dialect	resource
idiom	narrative
narrate	theme
exaggerate	symbol
tradition	archtype
heritage	

11. Rewrite a tale as drama. Select a cast and dramatize it for the class.

12. Make sketches, cartoons, or murals depicting the characters and the episodes in a tale.

13. Research and report (orally or in writing) on any recurring motif in the traditional tales.

14. Students may write an original folktale. Encourage them to write in appropriate dialect.

15. Write a "Jill tale". It may be an original or an adaptation of a traditional tale. A major project could be a collection of "Jill tales". See example on page 14.

* 16. Read carefully "Amateur Collector's Guide" pp. 228-232 of Chase's American Folk Tales and Songs before trying to collect tales from community.

In addition to the individual student activities, the entire class could possible arrange to:

1. Take a fieldtrip to a major event such as the festival with the storytelling contest held in Jonesboro, Tennessee during the first weekend of October.

2. Have a story-telling session open to the public (especially children) and let students take turns telling stories. If this unit is a portion of a regional studies situation, why not have a "night of traditions"? Students (and perhaps teachers and parents) could perform ballads, dances, music, and tales for the community. Elementary schools will probably be happy to provide audiences for story-telling high school students.

3. As a follow-up activity, try scheduling a story-telling day once a month so students will be encouraged to continue the activity. As the classroom teacher, be sure to participate in the activity along with the students.

SAMPLE: ASSIGNMENT # 9.

Expressions used in Leonard Roberts' telling of "Jack and the Big Horse" at the Firehouse on June 30, 1976:

chunk of a boy: a large boy of no specified age, but probably a teenager.

carry on: to act foolish or silly.

break bread together: share a meal; eat bread from the same table.

make a sheep's eye (at a girl): to flirt with, possibly to wink at.

sorta prissy: with a great deal of energy.

clean as a pin: spotless.

this, that or 'tother: several things.

how in the world (could he accomplish a task): a rhetorical question indicating impossibility.

they (Jack and the girl) sparked: courted.

feeling pretty cloudy: feeling low or depressed.

budget of clothes: a small bundle.

job of work: a task.

(Jack and the girl) got pretty thick: becoming involved or at least very interested.

narrated around the countryside: announced news of (an upcoming marriage)

pair of licenses (for the marriage) "note plural form"

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT # 15: An Original Tale in the Tradition.

Once upon a time way back up in the hills of Madison County, North Carolina, there lived an old farmer and his wife. They had three children. There was a little youngin' named Lester. He was a tiny little fellar 'bout three or four months old. Next there was a boy named Jack. He was a spry, tow-head sprout of a boy about eleven or twelve years old. And finally there was Corina who was about fifteen. Of course, she went by the name of Corrie. She was strong and she was smart and she knowed it. As you probably heared, she was also female - a purty young

thing who didn't think much about her looks.

She had her share of trouble 'cause most people, including her pa, only noticed that she was purty. Well, this particular fall, there was a new teacher over in the valley and Corrie wanted in the worst way to go to school, but Pa couldn't spare the kids. There was corn to be picked and fodder to shock and besides Jack had to go to school 'cause as Pa said, "He's a boy."

Corrie argued and argued with Pa until finally in flustration he told her "Yer pesterin' tarnation right out of me. Ye don't need no schooling. Why yer so purty that afore you wuz fourteen the boys wuz looking at you like a dying calf in a hail storm. All this summer Steth Mullins has been makin' sheep's eyes at you and he'd be a good catch. He owns nigh on to a hundred acres of good land and a right good cabin with a spring not more 'n a quarter mile away. You don't know when you're well off. Why can't you act like a natural girl and marry up to one of them men. They'd treat you good and take care of you".

"Pa, I ain't marrying nobody. Granny's done promised me her cabin for my own self. I'm strong and I'm smart. I want to go to school. Why can't me and Jack both work and then both go to school? If'n we both work hard, we can finish the corn crops and still go to school".

"Now, Corrie, there ain't no way to do all that work afore Monday. Why hit's already Friday."

"Please, Pa, let's us all try."

"Well, it ain't good sense, but I reckon we can try. Corrie, you're strong and you're smart. A feller just can't win with you."

When Ma heard Pa agree to let both the children go to school, she pitched right in and helped pull corn too. She just took Lester out to the field and laid him on a pallet under a big old pig nut tree. She 'lowed as how she wanted her own youngins to have the best things she could give 'em and she could at least help em with the corn so they could get an education. They all worked hard the rest of the day and way up into the evening.

Saturday was a bright, clear day and they all were in the field by sunup. Lester lay on his pallet a pullin' on his sugar tit and everybody worked hard 'ceptin Jack, and he worked fair to middlin hard. He couldn't see workin too hard 'cause he didn't much want to go to school anyway.

Nightfall came and there was still a lot of corn to out, but everybody was plumb wore out and Pa called a halt to the work at dark. Corrie knowed it was useless to ask, but she suggested they just might finish up the crop on Sunday and nobody'd be the wiser, but neither Pa nor Ma would allow work on the Sabbath.

Come dark Sunday, Pa read the scripture and told 'em all to hit the sack. Corrie pled one more time, "Pa, please let me go to school tomorrow."

Pa told her, "Now just stop your foolishness. Crop work comes afore schooling. Now git to bed."

Early the next morning,way before the crack of dawn, Ma got up to fix breakfast. Once she got the fire agoin', she called to Corrie to get up and fetch water from the spring. Corrie didn't answer so Ma hollered again and woke up Pa. He got up a fussin' and a complainin', "Now, what's awrong with that gal? She's strong and she's smart, but she shore is bothersome."

By the time breakfast was fixed, Pa was fit to be tied. He'd already had to go to the spring for water and milk the cow, and them jobs just went against his grain 'cause they wuz woman's work. Corrie'd allus done 'em ever since before Lester was borned and Ma had to giv up some of the work. Feeling grouchy and out of sorts, Pa set down to eat, and just as he took a big swaller of coffee, the door opened and in walked Corrie looking plumb tuckered out.

Pa turned on her, "Where you been? Out galavantin' and cavortin' around the countryside in the dark. What's the matter with you?"

"Now, Pa, don't get so riled up. I finished

all the corn and now I can go to school. Can't I, Pa?"

"Corrie, a feller just can't ever put nothin' over on you. You're strong and you're smart so I guess I orta give in to your foolishness. You can go to school, but you better do good. I still think you ort to marry and quick, but I won't make you."

And you know what? 'Cause Corrie was strong and 'cause she was smart, she became the best scholar in that school. Eventually she went away to Berea and got a degree and then came back home. Even now, if you're ever up there in the mountains above Hot Springs, you can see Corrie 'a settin' on the front porch of her Granny's cabin, a playin' a dulcimer and singing, "I Am Woman."

STUDENT EVALUATION

Evaluation can be made in a variety of ways. The teacher should decide which method is most in keeping with the goals of her own teaching.

1. Method I: Emphasis on participation and involvement in unit:

class participation and involvement	50%
Number of activities completed	20%
Participation in related activities outside of class	20%
Quiz over content of unit	10%

2. Method II: Self-evaluation by student based

on a questionnaire similar to the one below. The evaluation may be administered to a class group or in individual conferences with students.

SELF-EVALUATION OF STORYTELLING UNIT

1. To what degree do you think you were successful in attaining the goals of this unit?

Great success _____
Some success _____
Limited success _____
No success _____

2. What factors most influenced your success (or lack of it) in attaining the goals?

dislike content of unit _____
lack of teacher preparation _____
lack of personal involvement/ preparation _____
other (please be specific) _____

3. In your opinion, what are the greatest strengths of the unit?

4. In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of the unit?

5. Do you feel this unit should be used in the future with other classes?

____ If no, why not?

____ If yes, with what changes?

6. Based on your own participation and the degree to which you attained the goals of the unit, what grade have you earned in storytelling? _____
Tell why you chose this grade.

Method III: Emphasis within the unit can be varied according to wishes of teacher and students are still allowed options concerning the work they choose.

Assign each student activity a point value on the assignment sheet and at the end of the unit, total the points and scale the grades. For example, the assigned activities could be valued:

Activity 1 (telling folktale)	50 points
Activity 2 (rewriting folktale)	20 points
Activity 4 (reading tales)	5 points each
Activity 10 (vocabulary)	20 points
Activity 16 (reading assignment)	15 points

The optional assignments can be weighted according to the emphasis the teacher wishes to have in teaching the unit. A test over material covered can easily be included in the final evaluation if one so desires.

Method IV: Grade quality of each required assignment and give a test at the end of the unit over the materials covered in class. Although the most traditional method of evaluation, this method seems to be least appropriate to the nature and tone of the unit. If the teacher does indeed hope to develop an appreciation for and a love of storytelling,

participation and enthusiasm should be more highly valued than performance on a test.

Ideally, a unit of this nature should not be distorted by the promise or threat of a grade at the end. If at all possible, and in some schools it is not, try to avoid "grade consciousness" while working with the tales of the past. Traditionally, they were presented for fun: fun for the audience and fun for the teller. Maintain that spirit insofar as it is feasible in the classroom.